

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 689

By Harwell

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of David Kirkpatrick "Pat" Wilson of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Mr. David Kirkpatrick "Pat" Wilson, a renowned Nashville businessman and civic leader and former chairman and life member of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust; and

WHEREAS, a titan in philanthropy, business, and politics, Pat Wilson was at the nexus of nearly all the forces that drove Nashville's growth for the past fifty years, and his passing marks the loss of one of the greatest community leaders the Capital City has ever known; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wilson rarely took personal credit for the success of the various civic projects with which he was involved; still, he is legendary for his important role in helping improve race relations during the 1960s as president of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and in establishing the Metro Nashville Airport Authority, on which he served for eighteen years; and

WHEREAS, aptly described by Martha R. Ingram, Chairman of the Vanderbilt Board of Trust as "a towering leader of our city whose influence was immeasurable," Pat Wilson was a devoted and generous patron of the arts, as evidenced by his work in the founding of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center; and

WHEREAS, a 1941 graduate of Vanderbilt University, Mr. Wilson was a loyal servant and proficient fundraiser for his alma mater, and he played an essential role in forging a stronger connection between Vanderbilt and the greater Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, he was elected to Vanderbilt's Board of Trust in 1963, and served with distinction as its chairman from 1981 to 1991, during which time Vanderbilt achieved significant growth; and

WHEREAS, during the remarkable decade in which Mr. Wilson chaired the Board of Trust, the Vanderbilt campus expanded to include the Psychiatric Hospital, the Vanderbilt Clinic,

the Free-Electron Laser Center, the Kim Dayani Health Promotion Center, the first Medical Research Building, the Student Recreation Center and Management Hall, and the current home of the Owen School of Management; and

WHEREAS, also during his tenure, major renovations were made to Kirkland Hall, Old Central/Benson Science Hall, and eight residence halls; and

WHEREAS, he had also served as chairman of the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Board and the Board of Trust's Management Committee, and he was a valuable member of the Vanderbilt Alumni Association Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wilson had been involved in every Vanderbilt fundraising campaign in the past four decades; from 1970 to 1974, he served as chairman of the Harold S. Vanderbilt Challenge, which raised \$10 million, and from 1976 to 1981, he was chairman of the Centennial Campaign, which began with a goal of raising \$150 million, but ultimately raised a total of \$165 million; and

WHEREAS, he also served on the steering committee of the 1990s Campaign for Vanderbilt, which raised more than \$557 million, and was a member of the planning committee for the Shape the Future Campaign; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Mr. Wilson's many valuable contributions to the institution, several campus buildings and departmental positions at Vanderbilt have been named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, when Vanderbilt Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt announced in 1991, upon Mr. Wilson's retirement as board chairman, that the College of Arts and Science's new psychology building would be named Wilson Hall, the chancellor said, "His generosity is felt across the university through the thoughtful application of funds. Pat Wilson's contributions have had an impact on virtually every segment of this university."; and

WHEREAS, in addition to graduating from Vanderbilt, Pat Wilson attended Harvard Business School before volunteering for the U.S. Navy during World War II, serving in the Pacific theater in a naval construction battalion, and attaining the rank of lieutenant before his discharge; and

WHEREAS, shortly before entering the Navy, he married his first wife, the late Anne Potter Wilson, the daughter of Nashville philanthropists Justin and Valere Potter; and

WHEREAS, the son of a partner in Nashville's Fletcher-Wilson Coffee Company, Pat Wilson returned to Nashville in 1946, and co-founded Cherokee Insurance Company, which evolved into Cherokee Equity Corporation; and

WHEREAS, serving astutely as Cherokee Equity Corporation's chairman until his passing, he distinguished himself as a true leader in his field, and his impact continues to be deeply felt throughout Nashville's business community; and

WHEREAS, upon the death of Mr. Wilson's father-in-law, half of Mr. Potter's substantial estate was used to establish the Justin and Valere Potter Foundation, which over the years has benefited countless charities and organizations, not the least of which has been Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, through the Potter Foundation, which Mr. Wilson served as a trustee, Blair Academy was established in 1964, first as the pre-college music division of George Peabody College and later becoming the tenth school of Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Mr. Wilson, his family, and the Potter Foundation have endowed faculty chairs at Vanderbilt's Medical School, Law School, Divinity School, College of Arts and Science, Owen School of Management, and the School of Nursing; in 1997, Mr. Wilson added one million dollars to monies he had already given to create the Harvie Branscombe Distinguished Visiting Scholar Chair in honor of Vanderbilt's fourth Chancellor; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of students have attended Vanderbilt Medical School on Potter Scholarships and the university's Law School on a scholarship endowed in memory of and named for the Wilsons' son, Patrick, who died before he was to have entered Vanderbilt Law School; and

WHEREAS, Pat Wilson also was instrumental in the founding of the Owen School of Management, leading the effort to raise a six million dollar endowment to establish the school and donating the property that would serve as the school's first home; and

WHEREAS, he also supported campus beautification efforts, including the designation of the university as a National Arboretum in 1988, and through the Potter Foundation, he provided the seed money for the Vanderbilt Television News Archives; and

WHEREAS, one of Pat Wilson's most recent endowments at Vanderbilt was a chair in the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center in memory of his first wife, Anne, who passed away in 1986; and

WHEREAS, present Vanderbilt Chancellor Gordon Gee said of Pat Wilson and his singular legacy, "It would be impossible to overstate Pat Wilson's impact on Vanderbilt, and on Nashville. His commitment to the university touched, literally, every corner and every aspect of this campus, from buildings to scholarships to faculty chairs."; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his meritorious service to Vanderbilt and his other community endeavors, Mr. Wilson had served on the board of directors of Commerce Union Bank, First American Bank, Genesco, Inc., and Murray Ohio, Inc. and as a trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Robert A. Taft Institute of Government; and

WHEREAS, renowned as the most influential Republican in the Nashville community, Mr. Wilson was a major benefactor to the GOP and he served as finance chair for the National Republican Party in 1973-1974 under the chairmanship of future President George H.W. Bush; and

WHEREAS, committed to quality education, he had also served as chairman of the Cumberland University Board of Trustees and as a trustee of Montgomery Bell Academy; and

WHEREAS, Pat Wilson extended his sage advice and boundless generosity to many other civic causes, often anonymously; he was awarded the 1998 Tocqueville Society Award by United Way of Nashville for his long-standing service to the community; and

WHEREAS, he was a devout member of the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, which he served faithfully for many years as an elder; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wilson was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, this extraordinary public servant and gentleman is survived by his wife, Paula R. Wilson, and three sons, William Moss Wilson, Blair Jackson Wilson, and Justin Potter Wilson, former Deputy for Policy to Governor Don Sundquist and former Commissioner of Environment and Conservation; and

WHEREAS, Pat Wilson was notable among his peers and fellow citizens for always acting with integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we celebrate the life and honor the memory of David Kirkpatrick "Pat" Wilson, reflecting warmly upon his enduring legacy as a philanthropist and businessman and his many important contributions to the Nashville community and especially to his beloved alma mater, Vanderbilt University.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and many friends of Mr. Wilson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.